

Testimony of Michelle Morin and Michelle Yargeau on
SB 111 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS.

Members of the Appropriations committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 111. Our names are Michelle Morin and Michelle Yargeau and we live in Killingly and Putnam respectively. We support SB 111 with the following provisions.

The child care sector is in crisis. We need workers now. Some child care businesses have closed, but many more have closed classrooms because they can't find staff. This puts them in danger of closing in the next few months.

The ENTIRE system needs equitable support across all settings. There is no room to raise tuition for parents that can't afford early care and education now.

This means we need on-going, substantial wage supplements and benefits for small private centers, nonprofit centers (including religious programs) and family child care providers.

Plus, the state funded and school readiness programs, which have not had a meaningful increase since 2015, need to have reimbursement rates generously adjusted so that they are able to continue to provide high quality care and education.

Our Center, Country Kids Childcare and Early Learning Center, has to rely on the tuition paid by the families. This is not enough to keep doors open anymore. The staffing shortage is an everyday struggle. Worrying if we can staff all of the classrooms from day to day because assistant teachers and heads teachers have to go elsewhere for better paying jobs and jobs providing benefits likely not in the field of Early Childhood. The wage we are able to offer our teachers is not livable. It is at poverty level and these teachers are caring for our future. The future of Connecticut.

Substantial changes and support need to be made to stop this death spiral before it's too late.